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LETTER DATED 16 NOVEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the recent developments in Abkhazia, Georgia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Peter CHKHEIDZE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement issued on 12 November 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

Despite some positive developments in the settlement of the conflict, as reflected in the last report of the United Nations Secretary-General (S/1999/1087), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia believes that the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, remains tense as to merit more attention from the international community.

It should be noted with grave concern the diminishing intensity of discussion of the core issues of the conflict settlement and the credibility of the Geneva process, which have been challenged in the circumstances of the continued outright ignoring by the Abkhaz separatists of the principle of the territorial integrity of Georgia firmly supported by the international community.

Remarkably, the "Law on Independence" passed on 12 October this year, constituted the only response of the separatist regime to the efforts of the Security Council as it endeavours to consolidate a multilateral approach to determining the political status of Abkhazia within Georgia.

Although, as reiterated in the Security Council resolutions, all acts of the Abkhaz separatists contravening the sovereign rights of Georgia are null and void, due consideration has to be given to the fact that they have established a consistent pattern of behaviour, directed against attempts to intensify international efforts to diffuse tensions and to secure positive developments in implementing confidence-building measures.

This is the context of frequently made statements by the separatists allegedly on the guerrilla movement being on the rise and crimes attributed to it. Most importantly, they contain a clear threat to reverse the situation to the tragic events of May last year.

Under the guise of this propaganda, local criminal groups abetted by so-called Abkhaz militia are mounting a campaign of appropriating the revenues from trading citrus and nuts of the returned peasants, depriving them of their only source of survival. Clashes between these groups and widespread violence against the peaceful population are becoming a normal sequence of life.

By the same token, the mythical intention of the separatist regime to encourage village in the Gali region to form armed self-defence units is permeated by the regime's desire to give the impression that formal registration of arms by the Georgian population is permitted to face the threat stemming from the negative reaction of "partisan" groups for doing so.

As stated in the report, these problems primarily relate to the situation in the lower Gali region. Georgia welcomes the intensified efforts of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) to enhance the flexibility of the Mission's access to remote and unvisited areas, thus strengthening its

capability of monitoring and reporting on events in the zone of the conflict on the basis of the in-depth analysis. We express the hope that the operation of the Mission in Kodory Valley will be resumed soon.

The Government of Georgia welcomes the appointment of Mr. Boden as resident Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and hopes that his activities will be strongly and intensively supported by the United Nations Secretariat, Friends of the Secretary-General and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Intensification of monitoring, ensuring protection of the returned population was the aim of the Georgian Government when it took the decision to extend the mandate of the Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping forces. For its part, the Government of Georgia stands ready to actively cooperate with UNOMIG and to undertake further measures to ensure the security of its personnel, as well as create favourable conditions for the operation of the Mission.